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Fear of falling in patients with hip fractures: prevalence and related psychological factors.

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Abstract

OBJECTIVE: To determine the prevalence of **fear of falling** (FoF) in patients after a hip fracture, to investigate the relation with time after fracture, and to assess associations between FoF and other psychological factors.

DESIGN: Cross-sectional study performed between September 2010 and March 2011 in elderly patients after a hip fracture.

SETTING: Ten postacute geriatric rehabilitation wards in Dutch nursing homes.

PARTICIPANTS: A total of 100 patients aged ≥ 65 years with a hip fracture admitted to a geriatric rehabilitation ward.

MEASUREMENTS: FoF and related concepts such as **falls**-related self-efficacy, depression, and anxiety were measured by means of self-assessment instruments.

RESULTS: Of all patients, 36% had a little FoF and 27% had quite a bit or very much FoF. Scores on the **Falls** Efficacy Scale-International were 30.6 in the first 4 weeks after hip fracture, 35.6 in the second 4 weeks, and 29.4 in the period ≥ 8 weeks after fracture. In these 3 periods, the prevalence rates of FoF were 62%, 68%, and 59%, respectively. Significant correlations were found between FoF and anxiety ($P < .001$), and self-efficacy ($P < .001$).

CONCLUSION: In these patients with a hip fracture, FoF is common and is correlated with anxiety and **falls**-related self-efficacy. During rehabilitation, FoF is greatest in the second 4 weeks after hip fracture. More studies are needed to explore the determinants of FoF and develop interventions to reduce FoF and improve outcome after rehabilitation.

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